

Stretching Exercises

These are also good to use as warming up exercises.

Arm circling – to maintain suppleness in your shoulders.

Stand tall and relaxed with your arms at your sides. Slowly circle your right shoulder backwards. Repeat with your left shoulder and continue on alternate sides. Place your right hand on your right shoulder. Move your elbow forwards, up and back in a circle. Repeat with your left elbow and continue on alternate sides.

Next, put your arms down by your sides. Keep your hips facing forwards and lift your right arm forward, up and back to form a large circle. Repeat on the left and continue on alternate sides.

Any of these arm circles can be done with both arms together if you feel comfortable.

Forward bending – to stretch the muscles in your shoulders, trunk and legs.

Stand tall and relaxed. Reach up towards the ceiling with your fingertips, stretching through your whole body. Then let yourself bend at the hips and the knees, and bring your hands back down towards the floor, as far as is comfortable. Straighten up gently and repeat.

Side bending – to stretch the muscles in your sides and help keep your spine flexible.

Stand tall and relaxed with your feet apart and hands at your sides.

Alternate to the left and right. Slowly bend to one side, allowing your hands to slide down the sides of your legs, keeping your legs straight. Make sure you are bending to the side and not letting your shoulders drop forwards. Bend only as far as you can manage comfortably and gently return to the upright position. Stand tall between bends. Don't bounce into the movement.

Leg swinging – to keep your hips mobile and to stretch the thigh muscles.

Stand tall and relaxed with your weight on your left leg. Rest your left hand on the back of a chair for support, if necessary. Now swing your right leg forwards and backwards in a relaxed pendulum action. Gradually swing your leg higher keeping your body fairly upright and letting your right knee bend. Only swing as far as you can manage comfortably. Repeat with your left leg.



Calf stretching – to stretch your calves and keep your ankles mobile.

Stand an arms length away facing a wall. Place your hand on the wall for support and stretch your right leg out straight behind you with the ball of your foot on the floor, and your toes pointing towards the wall. Gently push your right heel towards the floor, allowing your left leg to bend as necessary. Repeat with the left leg.

Ankle reaching – to stretch your lower back and the backs of your thighs.

Sit on the floor with your legs straight in front of you and your knees as near to the floor as is comfortable. Place your hands on top of your thighs. Slowly and smoothly slide your hands down your legs as far as you can comfortably reach. Return to the upright position and repeat. Do not bounce into the movement.

Pacing exercises

Here are some examples of simple exercises you can do at home, gradually increasing how much you do. This is called pacing your activity.

Knee bends

This involves standing next to a table, resting one hand on the surface to help your balance, and bending your knees slowly as far as is comfortable and then back up again.

- To start with do 5 bends.
- Mark how you found this:
- Hard – Easy – Too easy
- When you find this 'too easy' for two days running increase by 2 bends and so on.

Or you can pace yourself by time:

An example of this would be:

High stepping

To start with lift each knee in turn as high as possible for count of 30 seconds.

Mark how you found this:

- Hard – Easy – Too easy
- When you are marking this ‘too easy’ for two days running, increase the time by 30 seconds and so on.
- When you get to 3 minutes you might want to try jogging on the spot for 30 seconds and start timing again increasing by 30 seconds when it becomes ‘too easy’.

Daily exercise and activity record sheet

Number of weeks since heart attack:	Tick what you have done:						
	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
Weeks Beginning: ____							
Stretching/Warm up							
Arm circling							
Forward bending							
Side bending							
Leg swinging							
Calf stretching							
Ankle reaching							

Insert exercises / activities you have chosen to do and mark on the scale how you got on.

Walking:

Day 1: hard _____ easy _____ too easy

Day 2: hard _____ easy _____ too easy

Day 3: hard _____ easy _____ too easy

Day 4: hard _____ easy _____ too easy

Day 5: hard _____ easy _____ too easy

Day 6: hard _____ easy _____ too easy

Day 7: hard _____ easy _____ too easy

Activity:

Day 1: hard _____ easy _____ too easy

Day 2: hard _____ easy _____ too easy

Day 3: hard _____ easy _____ too easy

Day 4: hard _____ easy _____ too easy

Day 5: hard _____ easy _____ too easy

Day 6: hard _____ easy _____ too easy

Day 7: hard _____ easy _____ too easy

Activity:

Day 1: hard _____ easy _____ too easy

Day 2: hard _____ easy _____ too easy

Day 3: hard _____ easy _____ too easy

Day 4: hard _____ easy _____ too easy

Day 5: hard _____ easy _____ too easy

Day 6: hard _____ easy _____ too easy

Day 7: hard _____ easy _____ too easy

FACTSHEET

Daily Activities: write down what you have done each day and how you felt.

Date:	
Date:	
Date:	
Date:	
Date:	
Date:	
Date:	
Date:	

FACTSHEET

If you would like to speak to one of our nurses in confidence, please call the Chest, Heart & Stroke Scotland Advice Line
Monday – Friday 9.30am - 12.30 and 1.30pm - 4.00pm
0845 077 6000